

DELAWARE RE-ENTRY EDUCATION TASK FORCE

December 3, 2014

9:30 a.m.

Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families

Multi-Purpose Facility, Building #9 (Conference Room 1)

1825 Faulkland Rd., Wilmington, DE 19805

MEETING MINUTES

Task Force members in attendance:

Kimberly Chandler, Department of Safety and Homeland Security

Nancy Dietz, Dept. of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families

Karl Hines on behalf of The Honorable Robert Coupe, Department of Correction

Jennifer Kline, CASA Program, Citizen Representative

The Honorable Chandlee Johnson Kuhn, Family Court

Kendall Massett, Delaware Charter Schools Network

The Honorable Charles Potter, Jr., Representative

The Honorable Jennifer Ranji (Chair), Dept. of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families

John Sadowski on behalf of The Honorable Mark T. Murphy, Dept. of Education

Laurisa Schutt, Teach for America Delaware

Kim Siegel on behalf of The Honorable Matthew Denn, Lieutenant Governor's Office

Henry Smith on behalf of The Honorable Rita Landgraf, Department of Health and Social Services

Wendy Strauss, Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens

Dory Zatuchni, Jewish Family Services of Delaware

Others in attendance:

Carlton Lampkins, Colonial School District

Kit Lunger, Office of the Public Defender

Alison McGonigal, Dept. of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families

Brian Moore, Red Clay Consolidated School District

Angela Porter, Dept. of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families

Barbara Riley, Dept. of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families

Cara Sawyer, Dept. of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families

Kelly Schaffer, Dept. of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families (consultant)

Janice Rowe Tigani, Attorney General's Office

1. Welcome and Introductions

Secretary Ranji welcomed the group to the meeting. Minutes from the November 17 meeting were reviewed and approved. Today we will spend a few minutes on report outs and then hear from the Education Unit and YRS, and the remaining time will be spent on recommendations.

2. Report Outs

John Sadowski provided an update about efforts to make student transcripts more easily transferrable in eSchool. DOE has been working with Sunguard to create a student information exchange. This would allow the transfer of transcript data. The process is in the development phase and they are still working with the vendor to try to figure out what it would look like. The EdInsight Dashboard should allow YRS to see student information once a student is enrolled in eSchool. DOE can unhide a component that will allow YRS to go in and look at that information. This still doesn't help with the problem of a student transferring schools, as transcript data will still need to be hand entered. Once the transcript data is inputted then YRS should be able to see the information in the dashboard.

Kendall Massett responded she thought there was no manual entry and that EdInsight was supposed to do that. She heard that when a DELSIS number is entered the system automatically transfers information, including classes and transcripts. This is through I-tracker. She noted if the technology exists in the state then we have access to it. One of the recommendations could be that I-tracker needs to give the information to EdInsight. If people are doing this without manual entry then this would solve the issue of access. Mr. Sadowski noted EdInsight is free. There is a cost with I-tracker. A Task Force member noted Colonial and Red Clay own I-tracker and sell it to other schools. Judge Kuhn noted that they've gone through I-tracker on the Casey program and asked for more information. Schools that use I-tracker use that and don't use EdInsight as much. A Task Force member noted there is a push to use EdInsight. Judge Kuhn responded that EdInsight has the capabilities but her understanding is not all schools are using it fully. Brandywine doesn't have EdInsight yet and is using I-tracker. Angie Porter noted the Education Unit has access to EdInsight and uses it. Secretary Ranji responded they don't get

transcript data through that. Mr. Sadowski noted that the concern is for kids that hop around. There are options for when you enroll a student into eSchool that you'd be able to go into EdInsight and look at their information or possibly I-tracker, with a cost. Mr. Sadowski suggested to Ms. Porter that they could look at a student together to see what can be viewed.

Next, Kelly Schaffer provided an update on progress toward gathering information about the 2012 cohort of students who left secure care. Ms. Schaffer noted at the last meeting there was a request to look at racial demographic information. Of the 66 students in the cohort, 50 out of 66, or 76%, are identified as Black or African American, and the remaining 24% as White. At the last meeting a snapshot was also provided of a student who left YRS care and did not re-enroll for 5 months. Questions were raised about the timing and the district. Ms. Schaffer provided additional information. The student was discharged from YRS in late February 2014. FACTS records indicate that in early March the student was not enrolled in school due to a recent change in address, though he had plans to enroll in Dickinson High School in Red Clay School District. In late March the records indicate he was still not enrolled and would reside with his sister so that he could enroll. By mid May the youth's records indicate his mother was still having housing issues and the youth was living with his adult sister and still needed to enroll in school. The notes also indicate it was nearing the end of the school year and the youth may not be able to attend for the rest of the year. July 2014 notes indicate the youth registered at Moyer for the upcoming school year, though notes do not indicate how that enrollment successfully occurred or with whom the student is living.

Ms. Schaffer noted that information continues to be gathered from FACTS to supplement the information in DELSIS. She stated that thanks to the help of others on the Task Force we have been able to look at records from the Adult Education system as well as records in the Delaware

Automated Correction System (DACS). We are working on determining the most current status of each youth through all of the data sources. New information has been learned from looking at the information from corrections. 39 out of 66 youth, or 59%, have a record with corrections. 27% of the cohort has an active status (18 students). Of the 27 students with no record, 9 – or 33% of those with no record – returned to YRS after leaving their 2012 placement. Secretary Ranji stated that is 73% recidivism between the juvenile and adult systems. Getting data about the kids is challenging. We've looked at state data and youth specific data. She noted it has become clear we need to have a better way of tracking that information. We have some data from alternative schools, and while students often go back there when leaving YRS it's a very small slice of the population for alternative schools. Looking at alternative school outcomes doesn't necessarily tell the story for these kids. There's a lot of tracking on different levels and something we need to address to be able to understand the status of these kids.

3. Review of the Youth Re-entry Process, Joint Presentation by YRS and the Education Unit

Secretary Ranji stated we provided some of the information that will be presented at the beginning of the Task Force process but now that we've been through discussions it would be helpful to revisit. We have YRS and the Education Unit here to talk about their work. Secretary Ranji noted that DSCYF is one half of what happens when the youth leave; the other half is districts or charters or wherever the kids go. We want to make sure to focus on this being a partnership or continuum.

Alison McGonigal presented to the group. Last summer YRS was granted an opportunity to attend a weeklong session at Georgetown University on supporting youth in custody. They had to focus on a capstone project and YRS chose to focus on re-entry. What they are presenting is

the work of the past year and she noted she is referring to Ferris and the residential cottages when referring to secure care. YRS also has detention centers where records are gathered but transition planning doesn't happen there at this point. When a student enters secure care YRS schedules an intake meeting. The meeting includes education, psychologist, youth, family and others involved in care. One thing that is an ongoing challenge is scheduling. We are working on a 24/7 schedule with secure care staff, and 8-4:30pm with other staff. The purpose of the meeting is to orient youth and family to the program, how the program works, how the stay will flow, routines and visitation. We begin to plan for discharge as part of the first treatment team meeting. From that point they schedule an initial treatment team meeting within 14 days of admission. Meetings can include anyone and historically included the probation officer, treatment specialist, psychologist, and a representative from medical. Until last year Ms. McGonigal noted they didn't even have the youth at the table. The youth is now invited, as well as anyone from DSCYF that may be involved and a representative from education. Treatment team meetings will take place every 30 days. Secretary Ranji confirmed she means internal education. Ms. McGonigal confirmed and noted because of scheduling issues education attendance is sporadic. Meetings last 15-20 minutes. When trying to get to the goal of youth leading the process she noted they know they will need more time for the meetings. It would probably take up to an hour. The purpose is for the youth to talk about short and long term goals, any problems, and to hear input from the family. In the past year YRS has allowed parents to participate via FaceTime or Skype. Transportation and availability can be a problem, even in the immediate area. A lot of families have smartphones and can join that way. The third meeting – in addition to transition team meetings – is the aftercare meeting. This generally occurs 2-3 weeks before the anticipated discharge date. This is focused more on transition back into the

community. The meeting includes the probation officer and family and could in the future include any professionals who will be working with the youth once they transition back. That's not in place right now. At the meeting the probation officer talks about rules and court conditions.

Next, Ms. McGonigal discussed some of the positive changes they've experienced. There is more participation between probation staff and families, and more emphasis on youth leading the discussion. The meetings will need to be longer particularly as more people are invited. We also want to make sure we're doing a better job of connecting secure care goals and community goals. YRS is also looking to implement an assessment particular to youth in custody. We use that to develop needs while in secure care, even though needs may change when they're in secure care. Risk might have changed while they're with us also. Those factors should dictate the youth's plan while in community. YRS wants to make sure what's best for when the youth goes home and is working with prevention and behavioral health to streamline assessments and substance abuse. Right now they are disconnected and they are working to find a solution.

Secretary Ranji noted that once kids come into YRS care Medicaid won't pay for their substance abuse services. When they leave then the family has to reapply for Medicaid and then go to a substance abuse provider. This is a critical time when they go without continuity of treatment. The Department has been talking with providers and some seem willing to come to the meetings even if we don't know if the youth will be able to go to them. Then when the student gets out there would be more of a smooth transition.

Ms. McGonigal stated they are working toward ensuring consistency, as there is some difference between Ferris and the cottages right now. She also noted they are in agreement with the recommendations presented by this group. One of the challenges continues to be scheduling.

The transition specialists are supported as this being their sole responsibility. Each youth's comprehensive treatment plan is in the Department's case management system. This could be outdated. She noted YRS wants to make sure there is a document that meets everyone's needs and looks at the youth holistically. The final challenge is that not everyone is seeing the youth as a whole. Multiple people are trying to work with the youth; school, treatment, probation, and all want the youth to be successful.

Secretary Ranji noted they have talked a lot about the issues with scheduling internally. Add to that the idea of better connecting to the district and there may be challenges. She added Ms. Schaffer presented the student who was transient; these kids don't have the certainty of where they will be. That planning becomes difficult and then getting the right people at the table for these meetings adds to the challenge.

Next, Barbara Riley presented on the Education Unit. She noted Alicia Blevin is also here who is a newly-hired second transition specialist. Ms. Riley noted she agrees with much of the things Ms. McGonigal shared. We need to work closer together and it tends to be a scheduling issue. The groups also have the same types of meetings but for different reasons. Continuous planning and communication and collaboration would include YRS, districts, transition specialists and families as well as potential employment providers. Employment specialists teach readiness classes and are working with the kids on a regular basis in small groups. They do mock interviews and take students to volunteer opportunities. They are helping them become emerging adults. We are looking at it in terms of what kind of vocational training they need, will they be going to higher education, and the networks of support that go along with that – family, student, school and special education. A third or more of youth at a time are eligible for services through the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). Ms. Riley added that this morning

a counselor was available to meet with a youth to help him prepare for working after leaving YRS. Secretary Ranji asked if the connection with DVR hasn't always been taken advantage of. Ms. Riley responded that the counselor goes to Ferris once a week. There is a great connection with DVR now. Ms. Blevin noted the counselor has a great connection, strong special education background and lots of connections in the community. Meeting weekly with students has allowed for a stronger connection. Ms. Riley noted that when looking at academics if the student is also interested in employment then we are putting them in readiness classes. She added that as we move toward working together closer and how to overcome scheduling issues they could start to do some of the meetings together. Employment specialists follow up with youth when they leave YRS. They may go to community, school or adult corrections – wherever the youth ends up. Ms. Riley stated they are also working hard with the kids on self-advocacy skills and revamping their portfolio. A portfolio has been part of the work. She stated we are working with a committee to make updates and will also have a contest to for the students for the cover of the transition portfolio. The portfolio is something that could be used a lot more. This would include a resume or recommendations. Ms. Blevin noted that they decided to put in a programming folder from the YRS side and any programs they get certificates for, or if they are student of the month, can go in there. There will also be a community resources section for anything they can get involved with or the Education Unit feels could benefit the youth. Ms. Riley noted the current portfolio has been in use for 5-7 years.

Secretary Ranji noted that up until now they've always had one transition specialist. Now they have two, which is still not enough. We have also been researching information from other states that have already pulled together a more cohesive transition plan that includes all the documents and captures the information we think it needs to have. We may include that in the

report as an appendix.

Mr. Sadowski asked if Ms. Blevin could describe how she sees the representative from the home school involved in this process from beginning to end. Ms. Blevin noted that for the next three weeks she is meeting with every district and alternative school. She is getting to see everyone's perspective and lack of understanding of what we do at DSCYF. At the consortium meeting she noted she invited them to take a tour. It is important to have them understand the experience given at Ferris. One of the things we are trying to do is create a mainstream list of who is in charge of transitions at the district level and at the school level. That way everyone will be working off the same list. Every district is unique, and Ms. Blevin noted when she goes to a district she finds out what their needs are for their students and what they want for updates on students. When going to alternative schools she is attempting to understand the review process to get back into schools. Ms. Blevin stated the process confuses her, so students must be confused as well. Part of this is understanding all of the programs YRS offers. Between YRS and the Education Unit the Department works with the whole student and there are lots of opportunities. Most people didn't know that students could access Groves at Ferris. One of the things that came up at the meeting was the creation of a webinar to show all of the programming that's offered and what's available to the student outside, as well as the follow up done in the communities. Ms. Blevin also noted she goes to visit alternative schools once a week. Some of the needs of the students are basic – socks and coats. Until there is a mainstream process she noted she will piecemeal it together. She added that by the beginning of January she hopes to meet with every district. Mr. Sadowski responded that one of the important pieces was that transition planning will begin at entry and districts need to be involved. The school level person needs to know who must show up. Ms. Riley noted another important part is they are working

with kids on self-advocacy skills; the youth needs to be able to say what they've done while with the Education Unit.

Ms. Blevin continued to say she will have portfolios with her, and will create conversations with the youth about what he might be proud of; it might be a paper that he got a C on. Ms. Blevin noted they would have flash drives for student success plans. Students need to be on the system and have documents and they are in the process of implementing this so the student can see future plans. She added she was tasked with making sure students have all the documents they need on a flash drive when they leave – resume, contact lists and best work. She mentioned they haven't decided how they will get the flash drives home. The flash drives can also include any YRS documents that need to go on there. A Task Force member asked if there is a way for schools to get a zip copy. Ms. Blevin responded they have an electronic file on every student that comes out of YRS and this could be shared with the schools.

Henry Smith stated we have started to talk about the ideal re-entry process, which he believes has four elements. There are quantitative dimensions - we can control the number of students that participate and we could reach 100% of students coming in. Regarding output, we can try to make sure students complete requirements in place. On the qualitative side there is good quality of effort. Where we still struggle is quality of effect. We are still looking at 73% recidivism. When we get to the discussion around things we need to do the question will be what do we do to supplement once kids separate from YRS. Secretary Ranji agreed. We've talked about what to do to prepare for that and a little bit about what happens when they leave. We can do a great job, but when kids leave and go back to their homes and communities it may be drastically different, including opportunities to make bad choices. We see that in recidivism rates. The part we have to figure out is what do we do after here. It's a question for DSCYF but it's everyone else's too.

4. Envisioning the Ideal Re-entry Process

Secretary Ranji stated we talked about the ideal transition process at the last meeting and in the meantime have gotten feedback internally. What it is calling for is similar to – but not the same as - what we do now. The biggest difference is it calls for district participation from the beginning of the process. A document was shared for the Task Force to review. Kit Lunger asked for which students this process applies. Ms. McGonigal responded Ferris and the cottages.

Dory Zatuchni added that community organizations are involved in the transition of kids. Lots of organizations do comparable work and see rates of adjudication less than this. Community supports the work. A youth family advocate would help. Secretary Ranji said building in the community-based support should be part of the ideal plan and building them in as early as possible.

A Task Force member asked for students who have IEPs who will get those records and for those who don't, will they do psych evaluation. A Task Force member responded you might not always need a psych evaluation. An evaluation needs to be done to make an appropriate IEP. She added she was thinking when looking through the transition plan that it talks generally about steps. When a child transfers in the middle of a school year there has to be an IEP meeting within 60 days. When reading this document she noted she was thinking about ways to build some of that in. It would be helpful to mention it in planning so it doesn't get overlooked. Ms. Porter noted they comply with the special education transition rule and try to do the meeting within 30 days. We need to do a better job of always making sure districts are invited to meetings. Whenever a student comes from a district to YRS we will ask if there are special education records. It helps to ask about special education records even if it is not indicated in DELSIS that a student has a special education need.

A Task Force member noted it is probably difficult to transfer back home. It seems great to have a specialist following up. If a child has access to e-mail, text or phone those touch points could be utilized so youth knows still they are connected to people who care.

5. Continued Exploration of Task Force Recommendations

Next the Task Force discussed recommendations. Secretary Ranji stated she would talk through what we think the structure of the report will look like. Then we will send you a draft of the report without recommendations so that you can look at it before the next meeting. Then at the next meeting we'll finish the recommendations and vote on the report, with the understanding that any final recommendations voted on at the meeting will be inserted. We may end up having to do final report approval after the next meeting.

We have four main categories of recommendations. At the last meeting we talked about whether additional transition specialists should be put into place to support re-entry into school, with the understanding that there is a bigger umbrella of re-entry that looks at home and community. We'll make sure to capture that broader issue in the report. There was general agreement that more of a focus on transition would be helpful. The discussion became whether that position is located in the district or Department. That's one of the reasons people wanted to hear more about what happens now. Some people expressed it should be in the districts.

Secretary Ranji asked for people's thoughts after hearing the presentation this morning.

Wendy Strauss responded both. She stated she participates on a task force for adults with special healthcare needs. Everyone felt the transition coordinators were needed in the schools. It would be good to have them in all places. Hopefully transition specialists in the schools would be working with all students to help ensure a better life after school. Secretary Ranji confirmed both as in the DSCYF and in the districts. Ms. Blevin noted Christina has a district educational

diagnostician who serves as a transition specialist. One of the things the students enjoy is that she comes every 2-3 weeks and helps maintain a strong connection to school. For other students that don't have a transition specialist she has called their guidance counselors so that students know they have not been forgotten about.

Judge Kuhn stated she thinks it's important that we have transition specialists inside the schools. In the long term they could be with DFS also. They could also focus on transition into the school if changing districts. She suggested it could be a combined Kids Department specialist within the schools. The woman at Christina is working with all students who are placed out of school. She works with all the PBH kids, DFS, and YRS kids who are out and coming back in.

Ms. Riley said most districts have transition specialists, and many focus on special education. But all of the kids need someone like we've talked about. A Task Force member said transition specialist means something else in the special education world. Here we are talking about transition from care to public education. Ms. Riley noted transition could be to school, employment, or whatever the youth needs. A Task Force member asked if the person would do special education and this. Judge Kuhn said maybe transition specialist isn't the right term if that's what is already being used for special education. At Brandywine there is a person who works on special education issues but not these issues. The woman at Christina was brought in for all students who are not in school, whether they are in a psychiatric placement or whatever it may be. She works with them when they are there and when they come back. Ms. Blevin stated the title of the woman at Christina is district educational diagnostician. She noted her understanding is she works with all students. She also comes to IEP meetings and holds district IEP meetings, but handles all students. She is the liaison between the Education Unit and the

district for Christina. She doesn't make the decision about placement but brings everyone to the table. Judge Kuhn stated her understanding is she is not working with the kids in the schools. She is most often out of the schools.

Ms. Zatuchni noted behavioral health consultants are in the schools and it works well. They are available 24/7 for families. Some transport kids to after school programming, and meet with families on evenings and weekends. This could be a great place to have a person in the schools. A Task Force member said if the specialists will be advocates then putting them in the school may not be best. The push and pull is advocating what's best for the student.

Jude Kuhn provided an example of visiting teachers, which are used differently. Family crisis therapists might be used for this role, but in other districts they may not. If the Task Force has the opportunity to define what we're seeking then we should we do that and not try to fit it into a pre-existing system. We should say this is where we believe it needs to be housed and what we need to do. Secretary Ranji responded that behavioral health therapists and others are embedded in schools but still work for DSCYF. What Wendy was suggesting is there would be someone in the district focused on transition and there would be someone that doesn't work for the district that would be more in the advocacy role. If we continue to deal with different levels of involvement at the district level it will be better but ideally it would be best to have someone who is the go to person for whom this is their job. Depending on size and volume there could be shared positions; not an-add on to something else. Ms. Blevin added this would also create consistency because districts are different. Some have the practice of sending kids to alternative schools when they return from YRS. It would create a systematic approach to transition.

Judge Kuhn asked if we get no new positions how can we share some of the burden among partners. She stated she would hope the transition plan would be an addendum of a court order.

When the student is transitioning back from level 4 or 5, we have the deputy attorney general, probation officer, parent/guardian and student together. If we have the transition plan there then its one more place and everyone could have a copy and the discussion could take place in that atmosphere. Kit Lunger expressed concern about the transition plan being a part of the court order, as this would be another requirement on the youth. Judge Kuhn agreed. It would not be part of court order; rather it would be an addendum. When a kid comes out of Glen Mills, for example, we are always handed a portfolio. The court can make a copy of it for the file. It's another place where everyone else is touching it. Secretary Ranji stated it would hold everyone more accountable to the plan. Judge Kuhn added she would be comfortable with this being part of the recommendations. Secretary Ranji responded we could write this up as part of the recommendations to vote on.

Mr. Smith stated that planning might not deal with all of the factors that get in the way of implementation. The person or team that would be working with the kids when they leave YRS would need to understand the complexity of what's going on in the lives of the kids. Not just saying it's someone who will assist you back in school; it's all of these other things. Folks who are skilled and trained in understanding factors for kids getting back into school and developing and sustaining interest will be essential. We are looking for a person to work miracles under a set of complex issues. Three-quarters of these kids are ending up back in the adult system or youth system. Secretary Ranji noted we are talking about transition positions that are necessary but not sufficient. We are improving in-house programming, but not what happens after they leave. We need to have more attention to the plan and making sure it's a real and individualized plan that is realistic. We have to have this piece to make sure all of the supports are being implemented well. The other thing is having an MOU to lay out who is responsible for what on

each side so that the pieces are clear, there is accountability and it is understood how decisions are made about kids. A transition specialist isn't the only answer. Judge Kuhn said for the 25% that aren't coming back into the system we really need to do this and we need to grow that number. The 25% needs focus or they won't graduate and we'll end up paying for that. Mr. Smith responded that the other thing we need to be interested in is expectations of the courts relative to what the kids can fulfill; for example, curfew. If a kid violates curfew, that is an infraction of a court rule and the kid is brought back into the system. Secretary Ranji stated part of the challenge is determining what's realistic in terms of which kids are not a risk versus those who are. When you look at the 73% - it doesn't mean the other 27% isn't doing stuff they shouldn't. The 73% also doesn't mean they're doing things that are horrible. Some are under a lot of scrutiny and people who are watching them. The numbers aren't perfect on either end.

Secretary Ranji agreed about recommending the ideal scenario for transition specialists – housing them on the Department side and in the districts who can focus on these kids. If we are going to go with the ideal we probably ought to prioritize. With 19 districts plus charters and the Department, we won't get all of that. Carlton Lampkins responded that whatever you recommend, if you don't have the buy in or discussion with district chiefs or designees then there could be issues. He added he sees districts mentioned in here but hasn't seen a conversation with district chiefs. If the Task Force is going to be recommending things and expecting them to happen they may not happen if the districts don't have input in the process. Secretary Ranji responded that one of the recommendations we should have is that we would do a meeting with the superintendents. She added we did invite districts to the table. Merv Daugherty, as the President of the Chief School Officers Association was invited to the Task Force and sent a representative to meetings. We also did a meeting where we invited districts that run alternative

programs. She added we could have the conversation. Mr. Lampkins said he suggests doing it. Secretary Ranji responded we did it in the content of the Task Force and will need to do something additional. We did a roundtable with four of the districts; those that have district alternatives. She suggested we could invite districts to another meeting for input. A Task Force member suggested inviting the chief of chiefs and he could take it back to others. Merv's role as President has now transitioned to Mark Holodick from Brandywine School District; and perhaps the seat on the Task Force didn't make that transition. Secretary Ranji said we're at the last meeting, so a lot of this will be follow up.

Nancy Dietz asked if the consortium meetings would be a place to roll out recommendations. Mr. Sadowski responded that the county consortium meetings, or the chiefs meetings might be. The consortium meetings are specific to the alternative school programs. Mr. Lampkins stated that generally speaking those are the people that are going to have to implement recommendations. Mr. Sadowski said we could do any of those options. Secretary Ranji added there might be other groups we decide we need to follow up with to get through the process and how we got there and how to move forward.

Secretary Ranji noted we need to prioritize transition specialists – positions in the Department or districts – and noted she thinks we should prioritize have specialists somewhere, whether the Department or elsewhere, that is outside of the districts. It would be harder to do it district by district. If we get people who can do it consistently then we can begin to develop those relationships. Mr. Sadowski agreed this would be an easier lift. A motion was made to have the Department as primary, and secondary to have added positions in the district role as well. The motion was seconded and everyone voted in favor.

Next the group discussed recommendation 1.2, whether or not there should be a school visit

required for the youth. Ms. Dietz asked how realistic that is and if we know one month ahead where the students are going. Ms. Blevin said one month is a good marker to see, because the conversation has been started. One challenge we are having is some of the districts expel students when they get out of YRS and then we have to figure out another plan. She noted sometimes she will call a district and then they'll say they need to hold an expulsion meeting. Then we have to wait for that to happen. This was discussed at the consortium meeting in Kent County and will be talked about in the other counties as well. Now that conversations will happen at intake, the expulsion meetings can take place while the student is still at Ferris. Mr. Sadowski stated if a student is out for 6 months then that should be part of expulsion time. They can expel retroactive to begin on a certain date. Then they will know sentencing ends at a certain time and they can talk about release date. Ms. Blevin said that when a student completes programming they have an education plan. A month out is a good time for the visit to happen and it will be a case-by-case basis. Ms. Porter said if a youth is in foster care we might not know where they're going. Other than that we should know where they're going. Ms. Riley agreed it shouldn't be punishing the kid twice. Secretary Ranji stated we asked four districts and they all said they don't count the time with YRS as part of expulsion. Youth get released and still have to deal with expulsion. Mr. Sadowski stated depending on timing youth might not be eligible for an alternative school.

Secretary Ranji asked if we should make a recommendation related to counting expulsion. Mr. Sadowski noted that districts are saying there's no reason they can't do it. Statute says districts will determine the re-entry process upon expulsion. He noted perhaps it could be worked into 4130 – the expulsion statute – to have language that says for a student who is incarcerated, their time is counted as part of expulsion. A Task Force member said it is the

school board that makes the expulsion decision. Some of the school board members would need to understand what this would mean. Ms. Blevin stated that's an example of the practice versus policy and we need open conversation about what is the best practice. Mr. Sadowski noted that would tighten the practice because we would propose language that does that. Secretary Ranji requested a motion to have the time that youth are with YRS to count toward expulsion/suspension time. A motion was made and seconded and everyone voted in favor.

Mr. Smith clarified that this recommendation would be to generate legislation. Mr. Sadowski confirmed. We may get some push back, but probably not enough to make it not happen. Secretary Ranji said districts could make expulsion time longer. Mr. Sadowski responded that 180 days is standard. Mr. Sadowski noted he could talk to a representative about putting language in there. This may also be a good time to clear up the definition of expulsion and the amount of time it represents. Expulsion used to mean students couldn't come back, but that's not the case anymore. Ms. Porter asked if a school is considering an expulsion if it has to be done within a certain period of time. Mr. Sadowski responded that regulation talks about what districts have to do. Ms. Blevin added that code of conducts have the same language but not same consequences. Mr. Sadowski said conduct is defined but not the consequences. There is not a standard. The exceptions are drug and alcohol and firearms. Consequence-wise everything else is by district.

Secretary Ranji stated the next recommendation for consideration would be, if a school is identified, that we adopt a policy/procedure for the student to visit the school approximately 30 days from release from YRS. A motion was made and seconded and everyone voted in favor.

Jennifer Kline noted that when districts came to speak to the group they explained that when a child leaves they go to a CDAP school. It might be important to have more accountability at

the district level. Upon review by district the district would be responsible for a written decision about the criteria used to send a student to an alternative school and to explain the reasons. The criteria would have to explain the rationale, which would be educational-based and not based on behavior or discipline. The premise is the child has been rehabilitated. This would allow the youth and family to see the decision and there would be a record of why. It might help with buy-in with the placement. There could be a process where that decision is reviewed, perhaps at the superintendent level or DOE. This would help ensure there is a process in place to guide decision-making. DOE has an existing regulation that says they will review CDAP placements. Section 611 says DOE will review effectiveness of CDAP programs by looking at student data and reports. Ms. Blevin noted that alternative schools talk about four criteria, so the consistency we need is to make sure that review happens. But sometimes the parent says my child is doing better so we don't want them to go back to the district. For others it might be personal decision. Four keys that are supposed to be objective become subjective. Secretary Ranji responded that she likes the idea of having a communication piece and the other issue is on what basis should decisions be made and can we set standards. Those are things we should address, which are included under recommendation three – best practices to guide the re-enrollment process and determining pathways once a student leaves. The communication part will be easier. The question of what role a delinquent act plays in the decision is one of the more difficult things to think about.

Ms. Kline responded she heard the district representatives describe in general terms why students are placed in CDAP programs, but not specifics about why the CDAP program is a better fit. This would require them to provide written information. Mr. Sadowski suggested that's one of the things that could be spelled out in an MOU. Secretary Ranji noted when we get

to those recommendations we could include requirements to communicate. We will come back to that at the next meeting.

Secretary Ranji stated that recommendation 1.3 we might want to change to get to the point about the Youth Advocate RFP and to have community-based supports. The Department is reviewing responses for the Youth Advocate RFP. The recommendation might be tracking how the Program is working and seeing if that is something we would want to expand upon. Also to Dory's point, maybe include in this tracking data on other community-based programs. We ought to look at how community-based programs impact youth. Secretary Ranji requested a motion that we continue to track outcomes related to community-based supports, including the new Youth Advocates so we can make further recommendations to effectiveness. A motion was moved and seconded and everyone voted in favor.

Next, Secretary Ranji stated we have a draft report that provides an introduction, executive summary, talks about the youth perspective, and has a section on setting the stage which will include national and state data and will talk about the 2012 cohort. The upshot is the challenge of getting data and tracking youth outcomes. Then we talk about the juvenile justice system and educational supports as they exist now. We'll add to that based on today's discussion. We also talk about alternative schools with background data. Then there is a section on exploring promising models. We also talk about expert guidance and some of the key pieces we've heard about. The recommendations section we'll work on as we vote and then there will be a conclusion. The appendix will include minutes and guests, among other information. We will continue to fill in the report as we go. We will send the report in advance of the next meeting. We will revise the recommendations document based on today's discussion so that you can think about them in advance of the next meeting. Secretary Ranji advised that if Task Force members

have comments they feel free to e-mail her in advance of the next meeting.

6. Next Steps

Secretary Ranji noted we would need to try to finish the recommendations at the next meeting and vote on what we have so far for the report. We will probably need to do final vote on report by e-mail after the next meeting.

7. Public Comment

Judge Kuhn announced to the group that a screening of the movie 3 ½ Minutes would take place at Family Court, funded by the Ford Foundation. The director and producer are coming for the screening. The story is about the kids who were playing loud music in Florida and the boy was shot and killed. It was called a stand your ground case. The documentary follows the trial all the way through and shows the impact on the family. Judge Kuhn noted the screening will take place at 1:30pm Monday December 8th. Information will be shared with the Task Force via e-mail. The film team is doing a screening here and want Delaware's feedback. The film covers a lot about implicit bias and some about explicit bias. She added that because Michael Dunn was prosecuted it has a different emotional attachment than what's currently happening in Ferguson.

8. Adjournment